LINCOLN-WOODSTOCK
COOPERATIVE SCHOOL DISTRICT
Annual School District Meeting Minutes
March 17, 2026

The Annual Meeting of the Lincoln-Woodstock Cooperative School District was held Tuesday, March 17, 2026, at Lin-Wood Public School in the Middle/High School multipurpose room and gymnasium. The Moderator, Robert Wetherell presented the ballot box, confirmed with the School District Clerk, Ballot Clerks, and Supervisors of the Checklist in the room that the ballot box was empty, stated that absentee ballots would be announced no earlier than 4:00 PM, and declared the polls open at 2:00 PM.

The Ballot Clerks were:

For the Town of Lincoln:

- Kristyn Daigle-Brophy
- Patti Jo Ouellete

For the Town of Woodstock:

- Cheryl Bourassa
- Kimberly Pickering

The Supervisors of the Checklist were:

For the Town of Lincoln:

- Susan Chenard
- Nancy Cunning
- Patti Jo Ouellete

For the Town of Woodstock:

- Stanley (Lee) Freeman
- Kathryn Cordeiro
- Faith Desjardins
- Barbara Avery, Alternate

At 6:01 p.m. Moderator, Robert Wetherell declared the polls closed.

The Moderator called the business portion of the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Approximately 60 people were in attendance.

Moderator, Robert Wetherell welcomed attendees: "I call the annual meeting to order at 7:00 PM. This is not a public meeting. It is a meeting of the registered voters of Lincoln and Woodstock. I am glad you appreciate the importance of this meeting. You are decision makers. I encourage you to ask questions and make comments. Thank you, facilities department, for setting up."

The Moderator lead the meeting attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance

Moderator, Robert Wetherell presented the moderator's rules for the meeting: "All cell phones should be turned to silent. Each participant will treat every other participant with respect and courtesy. The moderator will not allow personal attacks or inappropriate language. Anyone wishing to address the meeting will use the microphone and first be recognized by the moderator. Speakers will begin by stating their name. All other speakers will be considered out of order. I will allow non-voters to speak, however please identify yourself as a non-voter. While allowed to speak, you are forbidden from voting. The initial presentations on articles will be limited to ten minutes, all speakers in debate will be limited to three minutes (including a warning at one minute remaining). Time to be determined by the moderator. All new

speakers who desire to speak will be given a chance to do so before one is given a second opportunity on the same issue. Each Article needs a motion and a second in order to discuss it. Only one amendment to a motion will be allowed on the floor at any one time. No amendment to an amendment will be allowed; such proposals will be dealt with as subsequent amendments after the first amendment has been voted upon. All amendments will be submitted in writing to the moderator. The subject of the original article must be addressed in the amendment and it cannot be a negative amendment. The moderator can be overruled by a majority of the meeting. State statues do govern legal procedures not listed here."

The Moderator announced the following results of the afternoon voting:
Number of ballots cast: **92**

Article 01: To choose, by non-partisan ballot, a moderator for a two-year term ending in 2028.

Robert Wetherell	**91**	**Elected**

Article 02: To choose, by non-partisan ballot, three members of the School Board for a three-year term ending in 2029.

Jasmine Weeden	**81**	**Elected**
Tamra Ham	**73**	**Elected**
Tricia Lindow	**80**	**Elected**
Paul H. Schirduan	21	
Darlena Clark-Write-In	1	

Article 03: To hear all reports of Agents, Auditors, Committees or Officers chosen, and pass any vote relating thereto.

Tamra Ham made a motion, seconded by Jay Duguay, to approve the reports in Article 3 as written.

Discussion: None.

The Moderator called for a voice vote to approve reports in Article 3 as written. Motion passed by a unanimous affirmative voice vote.

Article 04: To see if the District will set the salaries of the School Board at $1,000, the Vice Chairperson at $1,250, the Chairperson at $1,500, the Moderator at $200 per meeting, the School District Clerk at $250 per meeting, the Ballot Clerks at $160 per meeting, the Supervisors of the Checklist at $180 per meeting, and the School District Treasurer at $4,867 per year. The money for this article is included in Article 5.

Tamra Ham made a motion, seconded by Jay Duguay to approve Article 4 as written.

Discussion: None.

The Moderator called for a voice vote to approve Article 4 as written. Motion passed by a unanimous affirmative voice vote.

Article 05: To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the School Board's recommended amount of ten million three hundred forty-six thousand one hundred sixty-three dollars ($10,346,163) for the support of schools; for the salaries of school district officials, employees and agents, and for the payment of statutory obligations of the District, and to authorize the application against said appropriation such sums as are estimated to be received from state aid, together with other income; the School Board to certify to the Selectmen of each of the Towns of Lincoln and Woodstock, respectively, the balance to be raised by taxes by the Towns of Lincoln and Woodstock in accordance with the formula adopted by the Lincoln-Woodstock

Cooperative School District; and the School Board further to certify to the Selectmen of each of the Towns of Lincoln and Woodstock the amount to be raised by taxation by each of said two towns. This article does not include appropriations contained in special or individual articles addressed separately. (Majority vote required)

Estimated Tax Rate Impact Lincoln = $0.237/$1000
Estimated Tax Rate Impact Woodstock = $0.300/$1000

Tamra Ham made a motion, seconded by Jay Duguay to approve Article 5 as written.

Discussion:
The Moderator recognized Jay Duguay, School Board Chairperson. Jay Duguay expressed his appreciation for the support of the District community. Mr. Duguay explained the budget request of $10,346,163 represents an approximate 5.4% increase over the current-year's operating budget. The budget is reviewed line by line by the Board and places to save, utilize other funding sources, or maximize dollars spent are identified. The goal is to provide the best possible education and good opportunities for the students. The biggest factor in the increase is a 25% increase in employee health insurance premiums. Approximately 76% of the budget represents salary and benefits. Other increases include the second year of the teachers' CBA and an increase in Special Education costs. There are no separate Warrant Articles this year for facilities projects such as flooring or roofing. A flooring project phase will be completed utilizing another funding source. The budget increase approved including warrant articles at last year's meeting was $574,000 and this year is $575,000 without additional articles which aligns with last year's total. The Administration and Board have worked to find other funding sources such as grants. The District has requested approximately $450,000 in grants and received approximately $250,000 with some outstanding.

The Moderator recognized Jerry Stringham, Community Member. Jerry Stringham expressed his appreciation to the Board for their work and dedication throughout the year. Mr. Stringham noted the Warrant Article mentions appropriations and asked what the taxpayers of Lincoln and Woodstock will pay this year compared to last year?

The Moderator recognized Jay Duguay in response. Jay Duguay mentioned Debra O'Connor, District Financial Manager, may have more information however, the tax rate impact for Lincoln is 23¢ per thousand and for Woodstock 30¢ per thousand. The overall increase in the cost of operation is similar to last year so would expect payments to be about the same however, the revaluation in Woodstock may complicate the calculations.

The Moderator recognized Debra O'Connor, District Financial Manager, in response. Debra O'Connor inquired if Mr. Stringham was speaking about revenues and upon confirmation noted, once the budget is developed, our revenues sources are identified. There is a revenue summary in the Annual Report. Approximately 70% of the budget revenues are from Lincoln and Woodstock which amounts to about eight million dollars. That amount is split based on the funding formula for the School District (Lincoln 65% and Woodstock 35%). Other revenue sources include grants from the State education grant, part of which is adequacy payments, as well as State education tax (SWEPT). The State education tax money is actually raised by the Towns and stays here.

The Moderator called for a voice vote to approve Article 5 as written. Motion passed by a unanimous affirmative voice vote.

Article 06: To see if the District will vote to approve the cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Lincoln-Woodstock Cooperative School Board and Lin-Wood Support Staff Association/NEA-New Hampshire which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits over those paid in the prior fiscal year:

FISCAL YEAR ESTIMATED INCREASE
2026-2027 $ 74,867
2027-2028 $ 44,570

and further to raise and appropriate the sum of seventy-four thousand eight hundred sixty-seven dollars ($74,867) for the 2026-2027 fiscal year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits over those that would be paid at current staffing levels. The School Board recommends this appropriation. (Majority vote required)

Tamra Ham made a motion, seconded by Jay Duguay to approve Article 6.

Discussion:
The Moderator recognized Tamra Ham, School Board Vice Chairperson. Tamra Ham noted Article 6 relates to the collective bargaining agreement (CBA) with the support staff including paraprofessionals and school office administrative assistants, etc. It is a two-year agreement. The agreement includes a $2.75/hour wage increase in year one and a $1.75/hour increase in year two making the paraprofessionals starting rate for 2026-2027 $20.50/hour and the administrative assistant starting rate $22.50/hour. The agreement also includes two additional paid holidays for school year staff.

The Moderator called for a voice vote to approve Article 6. Motion passed by a unanimous affirmative voice vote.

Article 07: Shall the District, if Article 6 is defeated, authorize the Lincoln-Woodstock Cooperative School Board to call one special meeting, at its option, to address Article 6 cost items only? (Majority vote required)

Tamra Ham made a motion, seconded by Jay Duguay to table Article 7.

Discussion:
The Moderator explained to table Article 7 means that the Article will not be discussed unless somebody wanted to take it off the table before the end of this meeting.

No further discussion.

The Moderator called for a voice vote to table Article 7. Motion passed by a unanimous affirmative voice vote.

Tamra Ham made a motion, seconded by Jay Duguay to restrict reconsideration on Articles 1 through 6.

Discussion:
The Moderator explained restricting reconsideration means that we cannot talk about the Articles again later this evening. If the meeting ends tonight, they are off completely. If somebody wants to reconsider these, we will have to schedule another meeting to take the Article(s) in question back under consideration.

No further discussion.

The Moderator called for a voice vote to restrict reconsideration on Articles 1 through 6. Motion passed by a unanimous affirmative voice vote.

Article 8: To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of eighty-thousand dollars ($80,000) to be added to the Special Education Capital Reserve Fund (created in 1998, amended in 2021). This sum represents the amount estimated to be received from state Special Education Aid from the prior year expenditures. The School Board recommends this appropriation. (Majority vote required)

Tamra Ham made a motion, seconded by Jay Duguay to approve Article 8 as written.

Discussion: None.

The Moderator called for a voice vote to approve Article 8 as written. Motion passed by a unanimous affirmative voice vote.

Article 9: To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate sixty-three percent (63%), up to the amount of one hundred thousand dollars ($100,000), of the June 30, 2026, unassigned fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2026, and place that amount in the School District Facilities Expendable Trust Fund (created in 1999). The School Board recommends this appropriation. (Majority vote required)

Tamra Ham made a motion, seconded by Jay Duguay to approve Article 9 as written.

Discussion: None.

The Moderator called for a voice vote to approve Article 9 as written. Motion passed by a unanimous affirmative voice vote.

Article 10: To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate thirty-one percent (31%), up to the amount of fifty thousand dollars ($50,000), of the June 30, 2026, unassigned fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2026, and place that amount in the School District Technology Expendable Trust Fund (created in 1999). The School Board recommends this appropriation. (Majority vote required)

Tamra Ham made a motion, seconded by Jay Duguay to approve Article 10 as written.

Discussion: None.

The Moderator called for a voice vote to approve Article 10 as written. Motion passed by a unanimous affirmative voice vote.

Article 11: To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate six percent (6%), up to the amount of ten thousand dollars ($10,000), of the June 30, 2026, unassigned fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2026, and place that amount in the School District Equipment Expendable Trust Fund (created in 1999). The School Board recommends this appropriation. (Majority vote required)

Tamra Ham made a motion, seconded by Jay Duguay to approve Article 11 as written.

Discussion: None.

The Moderator called for a voice vote to approve Article 11 as written. Motion passed by a unanimous affirmative voice vote.

Article 12: To see if the Lincoln-Woodstock Cooperative School District shall vote to adopt the provisions of NH RSA Chapter 194-D and become an open enrollment school district under the terms of the RSA, to admit one (1) student from outside the Lincoln-Woodstock Cooperative School District to grades K-5, one (1) student from outside the Lincoln-Woodstock Cooperative School District to grades 6-8, and one (1) student from outside the Lincoln-Woodstock Cooperative School District to grades 9-12, and to allow zero percent (0%) of the resident student population eligible to seek enrollment outside of the District. The School Board recommends this article. (Majority vote required)

Tamra Ham made a motion, seconded by Jay Duguay to approve Article 12 as written.

Discussion:
The Moderator recognized Jay Duguay, School Board Chairperson. Jay Duguay mentioned he has heard of some confusion within the District community regarding open enrollment. The State of NH has had an open enrollment statute since 2009 that allows schools to opt in as open enrollment schools. Up until October of last year the belief was that if the District did not opt into the open enrollment program it had no effect on the District. In October of last year the NH Supreme Court ruled that whether or not a District has opted into open enrollment or not, the sending District is still responsible to fund any student that wants to attend another open enrollment school up to 80% of the sending District's cost per pupil (approximately $26,000 per student for Lin-Wood). This set off discussions statewide on the impact of open enrollment. Sending Districts would see funding leave the District into other communities where the taxpayers who raised the money have no control over it. There is a lot of concern statewide particularly in smaller District's like Lin-Wood. Having just a few students leaving the District could have an sizable impact on the District's budget and ability to plan for expenses and monies available to cover those expenses. At this point NH RSA 194-D still allows the District to opt into open enrollment and that is the purpose of Article 12. The RSA also allows that limits can be set on the amount of students that the District can accept under open enrollment and the number of students the District is willing to pay for if they leave. In Article 12 the District is setting the limit of students allowed to attend Lin-Wood under open enrollment to one per school (elementary, middle, and high) for a total of three students and setting the limit of Lin-Wood's student body able to leave to zero percent. Setting the limit to zero percent for students leaving the District is the District's way of exerting some control over our budget and the money we are raising locally for our schools. The monies will not be sent to another school where the taxpayers that are raising the funds have no say in how those monies are spent. The more confusing part, based on declining enrollments, is the District limiting the number of students able to attend Lin-Wood through open enrollment to just one per school. The District is working with other North Country Districts to advance our shared interest of having the ability to control local tax dollars and plan for and fund our school. We do not want to be taking students and funding from other schools in the same way we do not want other schools taking students and funding from Lin-Wood. It is a joint effort among the North Country Districts to limiting the negative impact that broad open enrollment and shifting of students would have on our communities. There is legislation currently pending in Concord that is targeted at eliminating any local control on open enrollment. Asking for support on this Article to allow the District to control what we can for as long as we can regarding locally raised tax dollars.

The Moderator recognized Karen Silverberg, Community Member. Karen Silverberg asked for clarification regarding NH RSA 194-D as to being allowed to set the number of students able to leave at zero percent? It seems to be counterintuitive.

The Moderator recognized Jay Duguay in response. Jay Duguay noted while he didn't disagree, 194-D:3 I.(c)(1) indicates school districts "shall impose limitation on the number of resident pupils who may attend open enrollment schools located inside and outside the school district These limitations shall be represented as any percentage between zero and 100 percent of the school district's current pupil enrollment." The statute does currently allow those limits to be set but whether that part of the statute will be eliminated with new legislation is uncertain.

The Moderator called for a voice vote to approve Article 12 as written. Motion passed by a unanimous affirmative voice vote.

Article 13: To see if the Lincoln-Woodstock Cooperative School District will vote to request the School Board to establish an Advisory Committee for the purpose of exploring ideas to address declining student enrollment and increasing operational costs within the District, and to ensure alignment with the Lincoln-Woodstock Cooperative School District Strategic Plan.

The committee shall review and evaluate various educational and organizational configurations at the elementary level. This review shall include, but is not limited to:

* Multi-age and multi-grade classroom models.
* Optimal teacher-to-student ratios per grade level.

The committee shall report its findings and non-binding recommendations to the School Board and the community no later than January 1, 2027.

The School Board shall determine the composition of the committee, which may include administrators, teachers, school board members, parents and community members from both Lincoln and Woodstock. The School Board recommends this article. (Majority vote required).

Tamra Ham made a motion, seconded by Jay Duguay to approve Article 13 as written.

Discussion:
The Moderator recognized Jay Duguay, School Board Chairperson. Jay Duguay noted there have been ongoing discussions at the Board level and with Administration regarding strategies to address declining enrollment and the needs for the District and schools. Declining enrollments are being recognized throughout the State, particularly in the North Country. This year the Administration came to the Board with ideas on ways to address declining enrollments. One of the ideas was to include some multi-age, multi-grade classrooms at the elementary level. While the District is doing this currently on some degree, this would become a more formal arrangement to maximize the utilization of staff members. As this is a significant change in what the community is accustomed to regarding education, the Board did not feel comfortable in making a decision without input from the community stakeholders. Article 13 is to gauge the communities interest in a proposal of this type not voting to change how the District educates right now. With a positive response this evening the next steps will be to set-up the committee and start exploring options.

The Moderator recognized Jackie Wilson, Community Member. Jackie Wilson inquired as to how the committee would be established?

The Moderator recognized Jay Duguay in response. Jay Duguay noted the goal would be to incorporate as many stakeholders as possible including community members, Administrators, staff, teachers, and family members to get as many opinions as possible. While the Board is not at the point yet to determine what exactly the committee and establishing process looks like, from the discussions it may be similar to what was put together for the Strategic Plan.

The Moderator recognized Jerry Stringham, community member. Jerry Stringham inquired as to why the committee seems highly focused on the elementary school and whether it would be considered to broaden the committee to include discussion of all grades regarding other ideas from the past such as adding a charter element or becoming an academy/ski academy?

The Moderator recognized Jay Duguay in response. Jay Duguay mentioned the reason the focus is on the elementary school right now is because that is where a need for change has been identified as smaller classes enter the school system. Ultimately, unless there is a rapid change in the community size, we will be looking at strategies to address other grade levels as well when these smaller classes begin moving up through the school system.

The Moderator recognized Marcella Shamberger, community member. Marcella Shamber inquired if the stopgap fails for open enrollment, could ways to market our schools be considered to gain additional students and increase enrollment?

The Moderator recognized Jay Duguay in response. Jay Duguay noted while marketing our schools is something that is possible, there is a concerted effort amongst smaller schools in the North Country to try not to negatively impact each other. There is a shared interest in being able to plan budgets and maintain control of finances and if we actively start to market to students, we undermine that cooperative agreement regarding

shared interests. If those shared interest are no longer strategically beneficial to our school and marketing our school to students outside the District becomes viable or a good option, it is certainly possible. However, Lin-Wood is limited geographically in attracting students as the nearest town centers are quite a distance away.

The Moderator called for a voice vote to approve Article 13 as written. Motion passed by a unanimous affirmative voice vote.

Article 14: To transact any other business that may legally come before said meeting.

Discussion:
The Moderator recognized Jay Duguay, School Board Chairperson. Jay Duguay expressed his congratulations and appreciation to Tamra Ham and Jasmine Weeden for continuing on the School Board; welcomed Tricia Lindow to the School Board; and expressed his appreciation to Casey Caulder for his insights while serving on the School Board for the past three years.

Mr. Duguay noted there are three very significant retirements this year. Kristie Morris has been an educator for 34 years, 28 at Lin-Wood. Mrs. Morris's years of dedication to this school are very much appreciated. Thank you to Nancy Brown who has been with Lin-Wood for 18 years as a paraeducator and was a substitute teacher previous to that time. Much appreciation was expressed to Debra O'Connor who has served at the District for 26 years as Business Administrator/Financial Manager. Mrs. O'Connor has been a reliable presences, a pleasure to work with, and will be missed. The District is fortunate that Mrs. O'Connor will be staying on for the transition to the new Business Administrator.

Tamra Ham made a motion, seconded by Jay Duguay to dissolve the meeting.

Discussion: Moderator, Robert Wetherell explained a motion to dissolve indicates the meeting has clearly ended and no further business will be conducted.

The Moderator called for a voice vote. Motion passed by a unanimous affirmative voice vote and the meeting dissolved at 7:39 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sharon Holt
School District Clerk